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ABSTRACT

This book discusses various major aspects of competition in education. It identifies competition within educational policies, programs, and practices, as well as the problems that certain forms of competition create. It also traces the influences of American competitive values on education. Chapter 1 provides an introductory overview of the competitive ethic in American culture, followed by a statement of the functions of competition and its significance. A model of competition is presented in chapter 2, and it is compared to differing interpretations of competition. Then, relations and differences among cooperation, competition, conflict, and aggression are examined. Chapter 3 explores themes of competition and cooperation in the following areas of social thought--social Darwinism, sociobiology, and the works of Freud, Hobbes, Piaget, and Adler. Economic models of competition are examined in the fourth chapter. Chapter 5 examines historical and contemporary ideas about competition in American athletics, looking at how the various proposals for athletic reform would affect competitive practices in education. The impact of the testing industry on American education is discussed in the sixth chapter. Chapter 7 describes the debate between meritocratic and egalitarian ideologies and outlines a modified meritocracy. Noncompetitive theories of education are assessed in the eighth chapter, which include romanticism, progressivism, libertarianism, Marxism, and feminism. Chapter 9 describes a number of noncompetitive programs and practices, such as utopian reform experiments, the free school movement, and various cooperative programs. The final chapter summarizes and synthesizes findings from previous chapters and offers policies for augmenting healthier competition in education. Endnotes accompany each chapter. (LMI)

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